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SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 1870.

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BIRMINGHAM MUSICAL FESTIVAL.

(From the "Times.")

BIRMINGHAM, Sept. 2.

Novelties crowd one upon another at this extraordinarily busy Festival, the success of which seems now to be placed beyond the shadow of a doubt. The enterprise of the Committee of Management assuredly merited such a result; but, at the same time, everything has been in their favour, not the least important phenomenon of the week being the unchangeable fine weather. A programme more varied in its attractions than that which Sir Michael Costa had prepared for the occasion could hardly be imagined. Upon the works which stood in no need of further recognition—such as *Elijah*, the *Messiah*, his own *Naaman*, and Handel's *Samson*, with which the Festival comes to an end to-night—he might have reckoned as a matter of course; but, in addition to these, all the new things produced have more or less justified his choice, while the miscellaneous evening programmes, intended chiefly for the exhibition of solo vocalists, have without exception been happily made out. One thing is certain—everybody appeared content; and "What a splendid Festival, even for Birmingham!" is the general exclamation.

Since yesterday two more novelties have been tried, and both have passed triumphantly through the ordeal. The first of these was Dr. Ferdinand Hiller's new dramatic cantata, entitled *Nala and Damayanti*, the libretto by Sophie Hasenclever Schadow (the English version made expressly for the occasion being by Madame Natalia Macfarren). This new work took up the whole of the first part of the concert yesterday evening; and that, combined with other conspicuous features in the programme, it proved a genuine attraction the official statement subjoined will suffice to prove:—

	Number attending.	Receipts.
President and Vice-Presidents' seats (15s. each)	35	£26 5 0
Secured seats (15s. each)	810	607 10 0
Unsecured seats (8s. each)	769	307 12 0
Total	1,614	£941 7 0

The composer himself directed the performance, and on appearing in the orchestra was welcomed with the hearty enthusiasm which English amateurs have always in reserve for foreigners, especially distinguished in the musical art, among whom Ferdinand Hiller stands deservedly high, although not so many of his important compositions are generally known in this country as might be desirable. In writing *Nala and Damayanti* for the Birmingham Festival Dr. Hiller has enriched it by no means limited repertory of original compositions by the addition of a new masterpiece. Without entering for the moment into a critical analysis of the admirably characteristic music to which the poem of *Nala and Damayanti* is set we may submit the argument, in order to afford our readers some notion of the peculiar kind of task which Dr. Hiller has undertaken:—

"*Nala and Damayanti* is founded on a Hindu poem of great antiquity—'The Nala' one of the episodes of the 'Mahabharata.' The two great epic poems of Ancient India, the 'Mahabharata' and 'Ramayana,' bear something like the same relation to Hindu literature, with respect to national importance as the 'Iliad' and the 'Odyssey' to that of Ancient Greece. The 'Mahabharata' is an aggregate of epics, founded on popular legends of antiquity. The compiler is said to have been Vyassa, who lived about 500 years before Homer. The episode of 'Nala' occurs in the 'Mahabharata' as an incidental narrative. A holy Brahmin, in order to restore hope and courage to a fallen prince, ruined by gambling, relates to him the history of the Rajah Nala, who, in old times, had, like him, lost everything at two fatal games of dice, and nevertheless had not sunk into despair. This episode is the subject of the third of the eighteen 'cantos' or 'parvas' of the 'Mahabharata.' King Bhima has a daughter, Damayanti. Nala hears entrancing praises of her, and she the like of Nala. Though at a distance they fall desperately in love, and miraculous swans convey tidings between them. The King desiring to marry his daughter, there is a competition of princes for her hand, but Damayanti will not accept anyone but Nala. Nala appears at last with a sad message from the gods, who have bound him to declare that Damayanti must choose one of the immortals. But she will accept no one but Nala, and the gods do not insist. The marriage takes place, and Nala conducts his wife to his kingdom of Nishadha. Days of misfortune come. The god Kali, jealous of Nala, induces him to play at dice with his brother, and he loses all—wealth, chariots, robes, kingdom, and wife. Nala flies to a forest; his wife will not forsake him, but, unwilling to allow her to share his misfortune, he flies from

her. Damayanti wanders in search of him; each encounters dangers and sufferings, racked by the thought of the possible fate of the other. The constant lovers at last succeed in meeting, and by a fortunate occurrence, Nala, winning back his treasures and kingdom, lives happily with his beloved Damayanti. The dramatic cantata, by Dr. Ferdinand Hiller, of Cologne, is built upon the earlier part of the story. It comprises the desolation of the Princess, dreaming of her lover; the ceremony, ordained by King Bhima, of disposing of her hand; the communication of the gods to Nala; his despair; his appearance at the climax of Damayanti's anxiety, only to give his message; Damayanti's choice; the appearance of the gods offering her immortality, and their retirement before the resolve of the Princess; and the union of Nala and Damayanti."

At present it must suffice to add that the performance, although there had been only one general rehearsal, although the music is as difficult as it is original, and although Dr. Hiller's manner of beating time with the conductor's stick is strange to the members of our orchestra, was really excellent; that Miss Edith Wynne (Damayanti), Mr. Cummings (Nala), and Mr. Santley (King Bhima), were the solo singers; and that the cantata was received with every mark of favour. It may be remarked, in passing, that on more than one occasion when the applause was most general, hearty, and prolonged, Dr. Hiller would by no means consent to appropriate it all to himself, but, gallantly taking Miss Edith Wynne by the hand, in this manner publicly showed his sense of the services rendered to his music by the accomplished young Welshwoman, an act which did honour alike to himself and to the artist whose exertions had been evidently so much to his satisfaction. That the freedom of Birmingham has been conferred upon *Nala and Damayanti* and its composer admits of no doubt. We may, perhaps, have an oratorio from Dr. Hiller (he has written two) one of these days—who can say?

The cantata was followed by Beethoven's sonata for pianoforte and violin, played by Madame Arabella Goddard and M. Sainton, who were both called back at the conclusion. To this succeeded the following miscellaneous programme:—

Overture (William Tell)	Rossini.
Duo—"Son geloso," Mdlle. Ilma di Murka and Mr. Vernon Rigby (Sonnambula)	Bellini.
Song—"Requital," Mr. Sims Reeves	Blumenthal.
Air—Madame L. Sherrington, "Invano il fato" (Robert il Diavolo)	Meyerbeer.
Trio—Mdlle. Tietjens, Mr. Sims Reeves, and Mr. Vernon Rigby, "Vanne a colei"	Sir M. Costa.
Song—Signor Foli, "Fireside Dreams"	Reyloff.
Song—Mdlle. Ilma di Murka, "Roberto o tu che adoro" (Roberto il Diavolo)	Meyerbeer.
Trio—Madame Sherrington, Mr. Cummings, and Signor Foli, "Il vento tace" (I Naviganti)	Randegger.
Duo—Miss E. Wynne and Mdlle. Drasdil, "Dolce conforto" (Giuramento)	Mercadante.
Serenade—Mr. Vernon Rigby, "The joy of truly loving" (The Dream)	Sir M. Costa.
Trio—Miss E. Wynne, Mdlle. Drasdil, and Mr. Cummings "Ti prego, O Madre pia"	Curschmann.
Hungarian Song—Mdlle. Ilma di Murka.	
Quartet—Mdlle. Sherrington, Mdlle. Drasdil, Mr. Cummings, and Signor Foli, "Over the dark blue Waters"	Weber.

The overture was superbly played, and encored so unanimously that Sir Michael Costa was compelled to give the last movement again. A word of unqualified praise is due to Mr. Edward Howell for the admirably pure tone and expression with which he gave the melody allotted to the first violoncello, the beautiful introduction to this most picturesque of dramatic preludes.

There is barely time to add that Mr. Benedict's oratorio, *St. Peter*, was performed to-day with a success that was never for an instant doubtful, and, what is still better, a success no less amply merited than it was brilliant. As it will be necessary to speak of the music of this oratorio somewhat in detail, its importance as a work of art being unquestionable, it is advisable at once to give Mr. Benedict's own account of the manner in which he has found it expedient to accommodate the subject to his ends. Here, then, is his argument:—

"The subject of *St. Peter* might be treated in various ways for the purposes of oratorio. Within no ordinary limits, however, could all the important events of the Apostle's life and all the significance of his character and position be illustrated. The aim of the present work is very simple. It affects neither to show, exclusively as such, Peter the Disciple nor Peter the Apostle; its object, moreover, is not to treat the chief personage concerned in any symbolical or representative capacity. What has been attempted is merely

the illustration of a few of those occurrences in St. Peter's life which most invite musical treatment, and, at the same time, exhibit the Galilean fisherman as an object of the Divine regard which so pre-eminently distinguished him.

"PART I.

"The Divine Call.—Galilean fishermen are preparing to rest from the labours of the day, when John the Baptist appears, urging them to 'Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.' After the forerunner comes the Master, who commands Peter to leave all and follow him. Peter obeys, expressing his firm confidence in the goodness of the Lord, and departs amid the benedictions of his friends and neighbours.

"Trial of Faith.—The Saviour, having sent his disciples to 'the other side,' retires to a mountain apart to pray. While thus engaged the storm rises and the little ship is in distress. Jesus appears walking on the waters, to the terror of His disciples, whom he speedily reassures, bidding them not to fear. Peter obtains permission to leave the ship and go to Jesus, but his faith fails him, and 'beginning to sink,' he is sustained by the hand of his Lord. They reach the ship, and immediately the storm ceases. A chorus of praise and thanksgiving then brings the first part to an end.

"PART II.

"Denial.—Peter declares his resolve to follow the Master at all hazards; but when Jesus is taken before the High Priest the disciple is found 'afar off.' He enters the servants' hall of the High Priest's Palace, where a crowd of attendants are expressing their hatred of the 'Nazarene,' and Peter is three times charged with being a follower of Jesus. Three times he denies the accusation.

"Repentance.—The procession escorting Jesus to the Roman Governor passes through the hall where Peter is, and the Lord turns and looks upon His erring disciple. Touched to the heart, Peter repents, 'with strong crying and tears,' the anguish of his soul being heightened by each successive scene of the great drama which then passes before him. He hears the lamentations of fellow-disciples and the mournful song of his Lord's mother; he watches the procession to Calvary, and listens to the taunts of the Jews as they mingle with the wailings of the 'daughters of Jerusalem.' Weeping for 'all these things' and for himself, the hope of the Christian comes to his aid, and he is assured that death will be swallowed up in victory.

"Deliverance.—Peter, lying in the dungeon where Herod had thrown him, is visited by angels, who assure him of Divine help, and release him from captivity. He acknowledges the goodness of God, fully relying upon which he expresses confidence as to his ultimate entrance into the everlasting kingdom of his Lord and Saviour. Rejoicing his fellow-believers he is received with gladness, and a song of hope and joy forms the conclusion of the work."

Of the very striking performance of the new work, under its composer's own direction, and of its truly enthusiastic reception, we must defer speaking. How great was the curiosity to hear *St. Peter* may be gathered from the subjoined official statement of attendance and receipts:—

	Number attending.	Receipts.
President and Vice-Presidents' seats (21s. each) ...	199 ...	£208 19 0
Secured seats (21s. each) ...	1,104 ...	1,159 4 0
Unsecured seats (10s. 6d. each) ...	695 ...	364 17 6
Donations and collections	318 15 10
	1,993	£2,051 16 4

St. Peter was followed by the *Requiem* of Mozart—a more than ordinarily long morning performance. The solo singers in the oratorio were Mdlle. Tietjens, Madame Patey, Mrs. Sutton, Messrs. Cummings, Santley, and Sims Reeves; in the *Requiem*, Mdlles. Ilma di Murska and Drasdil, Mr. V. Rigby and Signor Foli.

Among the company to-day were observed the following:—

President, the Right Hon. Earl of Bradford and party, the Mayor of Birmingham and party, Maria Marchioness of Ailesbury, Lord and Lady Newport, Lord and Lady Edward Clinton, the Dowager Lady Willoughby de Broke, Lord Elliott, Lord and Lady Wrottesley, the High Sheriff of Staffordshire and party, the High Sheriff of Worcestershire and party, Lord Charles Bertie Percy and party, Lady Ward and party, Lady Wilmot Horton, the Right Hon. Sir C. B. Adderley, M. P., and party; the Hon. Mr. Lyttelton and party, the Hon. E. S. Parker Jervis and party, the Hon. Mrs. Newdigate, Sir Baldwin Leighton and Miss Leighton, the Hon. Mrs. Charles Boothby and party, the Hon. and Rev. James Leigh, the Hon. Mrs. Godesal, Sir Charles Oakley, Mrs. Pole Shaw Mr. G. Phillips and party, Miss Theodosia Hinckes and party, the Dowager Lady Mordaunt, Mrs. Claughton and party, Mr. W. Otto Goldsmith, Mr. J. R. M'Lean, M. P., and party, Mr. S. Beale and party, Mrs. Dyott and party, Mrs. Walker and party, Mr. Robert Heath and party, Mr. W. C. Alston and party, Captain Traill, R.A., Mrs. Pitt, Mr. L. P. Hoppie and party, Mr. and Mrs. J. T. Chance and party, Mr. T. C. S. Kynnersley and party, the Rev. G. D. Boyle and Mrs. Boyle, &c.

Samson, to-night, brings the Festival to an end.

SATURDAY, Sept. 3.

Reserving critical remarks upon Mr. Benedict's *St. Peter*, which proved to be, in accordance with anticipation, the great event of the Festival, we may add a few words about the performance, the satisfactory character of which, all circumstances allowed for, can hardly be over estimated. It did not require the enthusiastic applause, and simultaneous waving of hats and handkerchiefs, with which, at the conclusion of the new oratorio, the members of the chorus greeted the composer—fortunate alike in the interpretation of his work and the manner in which it was appreciated—to persuade everybody that a genuine pleasure in their task had been felt by the multitude of singers. This was convincingly demonstrated in the spirit and general accuracy of their execution almost throughout—the result, unquestionably, of much arduous preliminary study under Mr. Stockley, conductor of the Festival Choral Society, and Mr. A. Sutton, conductor of the Amateur Harmonic Society, in this very musically-given town. For a first performance better choral singing has rarely been listened to. Equally happy was Mr. Benedict in his orchestra, which took as much pains with *St. Peter* as though it had been the work of their own respected conductor, Sir Michael Costa, Generalissimo of the forces, vocal and instrumental, as though, in fact, Sir Michael himself, instead of the composer of *St. Peter*, had been conducting. Last, not least, the solo singers were quite as anxious to do justice to Mr. Benedict, and succeeded fully as well. To Mdlle. Tietjens three important solos were assigned, one of which, perhaps the most beautiful of all ("I mourn as a dove"), she gave with exquisite feeling, and repeated, in obedience to the President's despotic signal. In a charming air for contralto, "O thou afflicted," one section of a phrase of which recalls the *notturno* of Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Madame Patey was eminently successful. Mr. Santley, to whom was allotted the whole of the music of *St. Peter*, sung it from first to last like the genuine musician whom we all know, making a deep and strong impression in an air, "O that my head were water" (Peter's contrite acknowledgment of his sin), his delivery of which was as pathetic as the air itself. Mr. Sims Reeves gave the music allotted to John the Baptist in Part I, and the two airs in Part II, in his most chaste and finished manner. Anything more purely devotional than his reading of the touchingly beautiful song, "The Lord is very pitiful," in which is foreshadowed a sort of pardon for the repentent Peter, could scarcely be imagined. What fell to the share of Mr. Cummings was accomplished by that excellent artist and thorough musician in such a way as to cause regret that his share in the oratorio had been so circumscribed. The little, too, assigned to Mrs. Sutton was carefully done. In short, Mr. Benedict had as good reason to be satisfied with his executives as with his audience. How the oratorio was received has been already stated; and it only remains to add that two other encores were enforced by the President—a quartet, "O come let us sing unto the Lord" (Mdlle. Tietjens, Madame Patey, Messrs. Cummings and Santley), for the most part unaccompanied, and a chorus, "The Lord be a lamp unto thy feet" (Part I.), one of the finest pieces in the entire work. In *St. Peter*—to avoid for the present further detail—it may be said with confidence that Mr. Benedict has gifted Birmingham with a new masterpiece of sacred music, one that deserves and is likely to be heard again and again. It is long, very long, since such an oratorio has been written.

The evening performance of Handel's *Samson* brought an enormous audience and large receipts, as may be seen by the subjoined official statement:—

	Number attending.	Receipts.
President and Vice-Presidents' seats (15s. each) ...	95 ...	£71 5 0
Secured seats (15s. each) ...	1,074 ...	805 10 0
Unsecured seats (8s. each) ...	935 ...	374 0 0
	2,004	£1,250 15 0

Fatigued—tired out, in short—as chorus, orchestra, and leading singers must have been by their almost unexampled exertions at this Festival, the execution generally of the oratorio which Handel is said almost to have preferred to his *Messiah* was one of more than average excellence. Sir Michael Costa abated none of his vigour, and those who obeyed the indications of his unwavering *bâton* seconded him with the utmost spirit and goodwill. The solo singers were Mdlle. Tietjens, Madame Patey, Signor Foli, Messrs. Cummings, Santley, and Sims Reeves, of whose respective performances in this well-known oratorio it is unnecessary to speak. Enough that the entire performance gave satisfaction to the audience, who, after honouring Sir Michael Costa with an "ovation" justly due to his almost unparalleled exertions, successively called for Mr. Benedict, Mr. Barnett, Mr. Sullivan, Dr. Hiller, and Dr. Stewart—the composers who had furnished new works for the meeting. These among them who happened to be present acknowledged the compliment in due form.

The following official table, comparing the pecuniary results of this Festival with the result of the last (1867), may be read with interest

by those—and they are by no means few—who care for the welfare and prosperity of the grandest of all music meetings:—

	1867.	1870.
Tuesday morning—		
President and Vice-Presidents' tickets	£284 11 0	£443 2 0
Secured ditto...	949 4 0	1,580 5 0
Unsecured ditto	229 19 0	157 10 0
Donations	641 3 7	823 3 0
Tuesday evening—		
President and Vice-Presidents' tickets	44 5 0	68 5 0
Secured ditto	410 5 0	1,315 10 0
Unsecured ditto	125 4 0	142 16 0
Wednesday morning—		
President and Vice-Presidents' tickets	266 14 0	144 18 0
Secured ditto	1,359 15 0	491 8 0
Unsecured ditto	353 17 0	138 1 6
Passes	7 7 0	—
Donations	103 14 5	143 18 3
Wednesday evening—		
President and Vice-Presidents' tickets	69 0 0	42 0 0
Secured ditto	677 5 0	537 15 0
Unsecured ditto	230 16 0	183 4 0
Passes	2 2 0	—
Thursday morning—		
President and Vice-Presidents' tickets	340 4 0	402 3 0
Secured ditto	1,913 2 0	2,039 2 0
Unsecured ditto	43 1 0	—
Donations	433 8 0	460 1 5
Thursday evening—		
President and Vice-Presidents' tickets	46 10 0	26 5 0
Secured ditto	1,233 0 0	607 10 0
Unsecured ditto	292 0 0	307 12 0
Friday morning—		
President and Vice-Presidents' tickets	250 19 0	208 19 0
Secured ditto	967 1 0	1,159 4 0
Unsecured ditto	396 7 6	364 17 6
Donations	460 18 2	318 15 10
Friday evening—		
President and Vice-Presidents' tickets	44 5 0	71 5 0
Secured ditto	706 10 0	805 10 0
Unsecured ditto	460 0 0	374 0 0
Totals	£13,342 7 8	£13,357 0 6

The proceeds from other sources in 1867 were as below:—

Tickets at £5 5s. each (65)	£331 5 0
Schemes	£375 0 0

Which swelled the sum total to £14,048 12s. 8d. What they may be by this time is not yet verified, but, as the *Birmingham Daily Post* remarks, "should they reach as high a figure as at last Festival, the total proceeds this year will be greater than on any former occasion." From the same authority we learn that "the highest amount taken at any Festival previous to 1867 was in 1834, when the Town Hall was opened for the first time, and the receipts amounted to £13,527."

Notwithstanding all that, in certain quarters, was prognosticated to the contrary, the Birmingham Festival of 1870 has proved a brilliant success. On no former occasion, indeed, has it been supported more liberally, and on no previous occasion have the exertions of the Festival Committee more amply merited the substantial results that have accrued. Even some of the local papers, for reasons superfluous to discuss, were apprehensive at the outset; but they soon changed their tone, and now it is one sustained and unanimous chorus of exultation.

We have to acknowledge the obliging courtesy of the Festival Committee, and especially of the Orchestral Steward, Mr. Peyton, a worthy successor of the zealous and active Mr. Oliver Mason, to whom the admirable organization of these meetings was so long and so greatly indebted.

LUCERNE.—On the 25th ult. Herr R. Wagner was married, in the Protestant church, to Madame Cosima, *née* Liszt.

LEIPSIC.—Herr Carl Riedel, the director of Riedel's Association, intends giving a performance, next season, of Hector Berlioz's *Requiem*.

PESTE.—The Abbate Franz Liszt lately paid this town a visit. The vocal associations serenaded him. He came to a window of his rooms and listened to this mark of respect, applauding vigorously from time to time. He then went down and invited the singers to come up and continue their serenade in his rooms.

BIRMINGHAM MUSICAL FESTIVAL.

On Saturday a meeting of the General Committee was held at the Secretary's office, Midland Institute. The Earl of Bradford, President, took the chair, the Mayor of Birmingham and a large number of gentlemen of the committee were present. The minutes having been signed, Mr. Hickman, superintendent of the ticket office laid the following before the meeting:—

1870.	Number attending.	Receipts.
August 30—Tuesday, first day	4,429	£4,530 8 3
" 31—Wednesday, second day	2,100	1,681 4 9
Total 1st and 2nd days	6,529	6,211 13 0
September 1—Thursday, third day	3,939	3,842 13 5
Total 1st, 2nd, and 3rd days	10,468	10,054 6 5
September 2—Friday, fourth day	4,102	3,302 11 4
Total 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th days	14,570	13,356 17 9
74 tickets at £5 5s. each		388 10 0
4 tickets at £4 4s. each		16 16 0
Passes and money taken at doors		16 15 6
Schemes		352 0 0
Total		£14,130 19 3

This, said Mr. Hickman, was the largest amount ever realized at a Birmingham Festival. From 1829 to 1834 no Festival was held, the performances having ceased at St. Philip's Church, and the Town Hall not being ready. The first Festival in the Town Hall was in 1834, when the receipts were the largest till 1867, and the amount was £13,998. There was one item for the present Festival still uncertain, namely, donations after the Festival. It might appear a little ungracious to say anything about further amounts being received, but the expenses had increased, and to pay over an amount to the hospital equal, proportionately, to former years, the committee would have to rely on the patrons of the hospital.

The Chairman was glad to find the receipts greater than had been announced, and proposed: "That this meeting dutifully acknowledges with gratitude her Majesty's gracious patronage. That the thanks of this meeting are due to their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales, and other members of the Royal Family," &c.

The Mayor proposed "That the thanks of this meeting be given to the Earl of Bradford, President of the Festival."

The Chairman congratulated the Mayor, on the success of the meeting, and hoped, not only that the success of these Festivals might go on but that on the present occasion a large sum might be handed over to the General Hospital.

A vote of thanks from the chair being passed to the Vice-Presidents, nobility, and gentry, who had honoured the meeting with their support, the Chairman then proposed "the warmest thanks of the Committee to Sir Michael Costa, for the great energy and ability with which he had conducted the music on this, the eighth occasion of his appearance in Birmingham as conductor of the Festivals."

Mr. R. Peyton said it was not generally known how much Sir M. Costa did before he went into the orchestra. He supposed there never was a conductor who equalled Sir Michael, and probably never would be. He had rendered great service in advising upon the musical arrangements, and he kept an eye upon the instrumentalists in London, which the committee, of course, could not do. They are indebted to Sir Michael for assisting throughout.

The Chairman before putting the resolution, said that though he and the public could not appreciate all Sir Michael Costa had done, they could appreciate the results, see the wonderful power which he exercised over those under his guidance, and the great superiority with which he wielded his magical baton. He hoped Sir Michael might live long to carry on the profession of which he was the distinguished leader and ornament. The resolution was carried. Resolutions were then proposed from the chair, congratulating Mr. Benedict, Dr. Hiller, Mr. J. F. Barnett, Mr. A. Sullivan, and Professor Stewart. Thanks were also passed to the Watch Committee, Town Hall Committee, Mr. G. Whateley, and the Strangers Committee.

The Chairman proposed:—"That the best thanks of this meeting be presented to Mr. Richard Peyton, chairman of the Orchestral Committee, and orchestral steward, for the great ability and judgment with which he has arranged the orchestral department, and for the untiring attention which he has given to the general interests of the Festival, to which its success is greatly to be attributed. To none more than to Mr. Peyton, were the committee indebted; and for the ability with which he had carried out what he had undertaken, the thanks of the committee were most justly his due."

Mr. W. J. Beale said that he himself had been congratulated upon

the success of the Festival, but that the congratulations were due to Mr. Peyton. Such judgment as he had he had willingly brought to Mr. Peyton's assistance; but the consummation of their hopes was Mr. Peyton's work. The resolution was carried.

Mr. Peyton bore testimony to the services rendered by Mr. Beale. He (Mr. Peyton) was not anxious to take upon himself the office he filled, but when Mr. Mason left, he saw that somebody must take it and it came to him naturally. Without the help of Mr. Beale and Mr. Chas. Harding he should not have got through as he had done; he was indebted, also, to the Orchestral Committee. He was glad the Festival had gone off well, for by the general public something had been said about the engagement of artists. In regard to this matter the committee thought that the Festival ought to carry with it the sympathy of the musical world, and that they ought not to engage artists at sums which would not be returned. Guided by this principle, they did the best in the selection of their principals. The hospital would receive the benefit of the policy.

Thanks were next passed to the Ticket and Book Committee, especially Messrs. Henry and Charles Richards; to Mr. Charles Harding, in connection with the orchestral arrangements; to Mr. Hickman and Mr. Thomas Simpson, for the ticket office; to the sub-committees; to the stewards; to the orchestra, instrumental and choral; to the Birmingham Amateur Harmonic Association, and other amateurs, for gratuitous service; to the Sacred Harmonic Society, for loan of music; to Mr. Stimpson, organist; to Mr. C. Stockley and Mr. A. J. Sutton, chorus masters; to the committee of the Blue Coat School and Midland Institute, for use of rooms; to the General Committee, to Mr. W. J. Beale, chairman, and Mr. Howard S. Smith, secretary.

The Earl of Bradford having vacated the chair, it was taken by Mr. Beale, who proposed a vote of thanks to his lordship. The resolution was carried. His Lordship regretted he had been prevented from attending two meetings of the committee. But he was prevented accidentally. However, all was well that ended well, and he hoped they might say that the Festival had ended well. He was glad to have been of any service in the cause. This concluded the proceedings.

Mr. Benedict's "St. Peter."

During thirty-five years of rather busy life as a journalist, and attempting original composition, I have, on principle, avoided obtruding my own personality on the public. It is with no common reluctance, then, that, at the eleventh hour of my career, I feel myself obliged to state a case, which concerns every literary man who writes for Music.

I have always held that, in an oratorio, no intermixture of secular words with those from Holy Writ was in accordance with reverence or good taste. The two greatest works of the kind existing—the *Messiah* and *Israel in Egypt*—were constructed on this principle. I have never been able to comprehend how any one could venture to dilute or eke out the text of the Bible, or to acquiesce in the introduction of verses from the Psalter or Hymn Book into Scriptural stories, such as occurs in the oratorios of Sebastian Bach,—unless, indeed, these be performed according to their author's intention, that is, with the audience joining in, congregationally. The admirers of Mendelssohn, who admit no fault in his judgment, will be displeased at my saying that the objection applies in yet fuller force to his *St. Paul*,—because there no such assistance on the part of "the people" was contemplated. Be these wire-drawn scruples, or convictions worthy of consideration—I have acted on them whenever I have attempted to arrange a Biblical subject for music; as in the book of my friend Mr. H. Leslie's *Judith*, and with greater care and pains, because on a more extended scale, when I treated the story of *St. Peter*.

This was the work to have been performed at the late Birmingham Festival; and my completed book, having been submitted to, and accepted by, the Committee, was handed over to Mr. Benedict, who had been selected to compose the new oratorio for the year 1870, early in the last year. Mr. Benedict, both personally and in writing, expressed himself (to speak moderately) entirely satisfied with what was set before him; and thus not only to myself, but to other persons. It was, further, expressly agreed on, in terms of the most perfect amity, that no alterations or modifications of the text were to be made save by myself. It was subsequently suggested by me that, should time fall short, only the first two parts of the oratorio should be performed at this year's Festival.

The past year went on, and I heard not a word of the oratorio; which was to be delivered for rehearsal at Birmingham on the 1st of March, 1870. I

returned to London permanently, after occasional absences (always within reach of recall), on the 15th of October, 1869. Becoming curious, not to say anxious, with regard to a work of extent and pretension, suggested by myself, and in which I had expended some research and contrivance, I wrote to Mr. Benedict, on the 15th of November, to enquire how matters were proceeding,—announcing that I intended to be absent from England for two months of the early spring of this year; and that I was anxious to leave nothing incomplete or requiring reconsideration. On the 10th of last January I learned, for the first time, that Mr. Benedict (who had answered my note) had shown portions of the music of *St. Peter* to more than one person, and that he had disposed of the oratorio to a publisher. In reply to my request for an explanation of conduct so strangely savouring of contempt to myself, I was favoured, on the 15th of January, with direct information from Mr. Benedict, that he had thought fit to make changes, omissions, and additions in my book; which had been accepted by him unconditionally,—and with regard to which he had not up to that time uttered a syllable of objection, suggestion, or remonstrance. He informed me that he had made these alterations by aid of a concordance. While I distinctly refused, by the slightest connivance, to sanction so amazing a transaction, the full impertinence of which was, even then, unknown to me, my intention was to keep silence with regard to it. I felt that every possible deference was due to the committee of the Birmingham Festival, in recognition of their known services to art, and in gratitude for their private and liberal hospitality. But seeing that I received after-communications on the subject from Mr. Benedict, not so much explanatory as aggressive, I have decided that it behoves me to lay the matter before the public,—the more so, since I have only very recently learnt that Mr. Benedict, had absolutely, before the oratorio was sold, thought proper to call in, not merely a "concordance," but the assistance of a gentleman, who consented to accept the strange task of remodelling another man's production. I have purposely forbore speaking out till the present moment, not wishing to damage a new work by the statement of such a case of flagrant injustice and discourtesy,—this however, out of no consideration to the composer. To myself the affront is one of small consequence: I have written enough for musical purposes to give the public a fair impression of such power, greater or less, as I may possess. But the cause is the cause of all younger (and I hope better) men who may come after me;—and to whom it may be of immediate importance that they should not be first cajoled and flattered, and subsequently ignored and insulted, by persons pretending to hold a place in the rank of artists.

Henry F. Chorley.

AUGSBURG.—Herr Bückel, formerly manager of the Theatre here, is at present an attendant on the wounded in the Bavarian army.

DRESDEN.—A considerable number of concerts have been given for the benefit of the Wounded. At one of them Handel's *Messiah* was performed, the solos being entrusted to Mmes. Otto-Alvsleben, Nanitz, Herr Degele and Dr. Guiz.

SCHMALKALDEN.—Her Majesty the Queen of Prussia lately ordered two gold medals to be struck, one for the composer, and one for the writer, of "Die Wacht am Rhein." The composer, Herr Carl Wilhelm, who resides here, has already received his. The writer of the words, Herr Max Schneckenburger, however, having died many years ago, her Majesty has commanded inquiries to be set on foot with the object of seeing whether the medal can not be presented to some child or relative of his.

VIENNA.—The opera selected by Herr Theodor Wachtel wherewith to inaugurate his engagement at the Carl Theater is *Le Postillon de Longjumeau*.—Mme. Minnie Hauck was announced to appear on the 1st inst., at the Imperial Operahouse, as Zerlina in *Don Juan*.—Herr Brahms has declined to accept the post as conductor of the Conservatory Concerts.—The following modest advertisement appeared lately in one of the local papers: "A young artist, who, from the very moment of his first appearance, has met with great favour and encouragement, wishes to enter into communication with a lady of distinction and influence, whose patronage might open for him a sphere worthy of his talents. He has been induced to take this step neither by a secondary position nor by want, but by a desire to be enabled, by means of such patronage, to break through, with the least possible delay, the obstacles wherewith the partisans of mediocrity and materialism endeavour to close against him the career on which he has so triumphantly entered! He cherishes, also, the hope of meeting a sensitive heart, that can sympathize with his ideal aspirations!"—The "young artist" above may or may not possess talent; he may or may not be in temporary want of "tin"—he most probably is—but there can be no doubt about his possessing a plentiful amount of brass.

Mr. Robert F. Bowley.

Those who for some thirty years past, have been among the figures most familiar to musical London are rapidly disappearing from the scene. The Sacred Harmonic Society has lost two of its oldest, most valuable, and energetic members: its venerable President, Mr. Harrison, who died the other day, at a very advanced age, and Mr. Robert Bowley, to whose shrewdness, energy of persistence, and thorough habits of business is largely due its present high—we might say unparalleled—position among the Musical societies of Europe. Napoleon the first contemptuously called England, "a nation of shopkeepers." Ours, in more than one notable instance, have done for Music that which the aristocratic and opulent, at home and abroad, with all their superiority of wealth, refinement, and intellectual training, have failed to accomplish. The Antient Concerts, though to the last upheld by our Prince Consort, our Wellington, relative to Lord Mornington, and like him keenly alive to the pleasures of music, Lord Howe, Lord Darnley, Lord Dartmouth, and other amateurs no less distinguished and liberal, were virtually swept from the face of musical London by the Exeter Hall Oratorios.

These began queerly enough; though with a certain earnestness of purpose, excellent to note in men, otherwise so practically occupied; whereas the *dilettanti* who ruled the Antient Concerts, had only rank, leisure, taste, and money on their side. The indigenous voices of London called out to make a chorus were anything but rich and tuneable thirty-five years ago. The "Antients" drew their supplies from Lancashire; and those were days when the journey from Lancashire to London was an affair of some eight and twenty hours. But a few tradesmen in the west end of London were resolved to have music of their own, and to Mr. Harrison, in St. James's Street, and Mr. Bowley, at Charing Cross, was mainly due the establishment of the Sacred Harmonic Society. For a time this body may have been said to exist rather than to flourish. Nevertheless, by its appeal to popular favour, and its courage as superseding the old intolerable playhouse oratorios which were no longer to be endured by persons of any artistic culture the Sacred Harmonic Society began to excite curiosity, attention, and respect; and its promoters were wise enough to profit by the strictures which the imperfection of their performances excited, to strengthen their orchestra, and to weed their chorus. A hampering influence, however, existed in the person of the original conductor, who, however well-intentioned, was, in no respect, equal to the situation. After a time, Mr. Surman, and the Society separated and the latter was placed in the hands of Sir Michael Costa. The result was at once immediate and progressive. Before many years were over, the Sacred Harmonic Society was strong enough to lend a well-drilled squadron of musicians to provincial performances, to gather a library, to establish a benevolent fund, and, lastly, to lead up to those stupendous gatherings at the Crystal Palace, which, when all in their dis-favour regarding the vastness of their locality is said, remain, and will remain, in musical history, as among the most magnificent displays of art ever seen in Europe. The greatest share in this progress and prosperity is, beyond question due to the shrewd foresight, energy, and administrative power of Mr. Bowley. Without such an organization, the Sydenham Oratorios would have been so many chaotic failures.

It is not to be wondered at that the directors of that preposterous building (for preposterous it is with all its magnificence) should be naturally attracted by the skill in generalship to which allusion has been made. In a lucky hour, the management of the Crystal Palace was, fourteen years ago, placed in the hands of Mr. Bowley. The right man was in the right place. He was firm, indefatigable, ingenious, of unimpeachable probity. Never was there an officer at once more replete in carrying out his plans, yet more willing to receive suggestions, always at his post, always with a resource at hand in case of difficulty. Hence, he was habitually called in and consulted whenever any great celebration was to be organized. In brief he was an excellent and remarkable example of administrative powers such as are given to few, and which entitle his name to a permanent record in the history of English exhibitions of art.

Such a life, however, as his is not to be led with impunity. The incessant strain on every nerve and every faculty, the honest resolution to fulfil every duty of a most onerous stewardship, could not but have told on one of greater physical power and a healthier habit of body than himself. It had been obvious, for some short time past, that Mr. Bowley's health was beginning to give way, but the end was hastened by the decease of his friend and comrade of many years standing, Mr. Harrison. The mind finally lost its balance, and a few days ago his life was sadly closed by a catastrophe, the details of which have been too largely laid before the public to be dwelt on here. It is enough for the present to insist that in the position he occupied, and for the duties he undertook, Mr. Bowley was emphatically a rare man, whose place will not be soon, if it be ever, filled.

B. L. B.

PATRIOTIC SONGS OF FRANCE.

The lasting popularity of the "Marseillaise," now nearly eighty years old, becomes more remarkable when we consider that, although the first song of the Revolution, it was immediately followed by a host of Republican effusions, which competed with it for public favour. There were the "Chant de la Victoire," the "Chant du Retour," and the "Chanson de Roland," by Mchul; the "Chant du Juillet," the "Chant Martial," the "Hymne à l'Etre Suprême," the "Hymne à la Liberté," and "Peuple, reveille-toi," by Gossé. All these, the fruits of a general ferment, have died away, and the only lyrical work that, besides the "Marseillaise," has continued to live in the memory of the French is the "Chant du Départ," by Mchul. This was recently sung at one of the Parisian theatres; but as it is a sort of cantata with solos and choruses arranged for different voices it can never become a popular song in the ordinary sense of the word.

One forgotten melody of the old Revolution was revived shortly before the affair of February, when the *Histoire des Girondins*, by M. de Lamartine was the book of the day. Girey-Dupré, a journalist attached to the Girondists, and condemned to share their fate, composed, a few hours before his execution, a hymn, which long afterwards responded to the state of feeling in 1847, and which, with a slight modification, became the "Chant des Girondins," better perhaps known as "Mourir pour la Patrie." M. Alexandre Dumas' *Chevalier de la Maison Rouge*, then a new piece, terminated with the supper of the Girondists, at which this song was appropriately introduced.

The lays of the First Empire were generally of a warlike kind, or, to speak more correctly, the words were warlike, though often set to the most pacific music. Nothing, for instance, could be less martial than the air extracted from an opera by Grétry, which was made to fit "Veillons au salut de l'Empire." However the First Empire was by no means badly represented in the world of song by the "Partant pour la Syrie," which in the days of the Crimean war became the most popular tune in England and France, and by the "Sentinelle" of Choron and the "Vaillant Troubadour," of Sauvan, both of which are to be found in the most common music books.

The Restoration brought with it the revival of the two famed Bourbon melodies, "Vive Henri IV.," and "Charmante Gabrielle." A pacific air by Grétry was now made to do duty in honour of the restored régime; but this time the music was not diverted from its proper purpose. The words to which it was fitted, "Où peut-on être mieux qu'au sein de sa famille?" rather celebrated the blessings of peace than the triumph of a dynasty.

The Revolutions of 1830 had a song of its own, with which great name were connected, but which after a short popularity sank into utter oblivion. Casimir Delavigne, the poet of the renowned "Marseillienne," was looked upon as the proper person to celebrate the deeds of July. As he had not even that uncultivated power of music which belonged to Ronget de l'Isle, he fitted his words to a Hungarian air, which he had retained in his memory, and which was duly noted down and scored by Auher. Thus arose the "Parisienne," and to its non-national origin is attributed the short duration of its popularity.

Of late the patriotic songs of France have been the "Marseillaise" and the "Rhin Allemand," which M. Alfred de Musset produced during the consumption of a single cigar, and to which music has been set by MM. Félicien David and Vaucorbeil. A greater novelty, however, is "A la frontière," with music by M. Guonod, sung at the opera by M. Devoyod in the uniform of a Zouave.

M. Eugène Manuel, whose piece, *Les Ouvriers*, although only in one act, was one of the greatest successes at the Théâtre Français in the beginning of the year, has manifested his patriotic feelings in a dramatic form, having written for the same theatre a scene, entitled "Pour les Blessés." The decoration represents a rustic house used as an ambulance, and the speakers are only two in number—namely, a wounded French officer and a woman who attends him, and to whom he tells the history of his service. The performers are M. Coquelin and Mlle. Favart.

DEATH.

On the 29th ult., Mr. ALFRED NICHOLSON, aged 48—sincerely lamented.

NOTICE.

TO ADVERTISERS.—*The Office of the MUSICAL WORLD is at Messrs. DUNCAN DAVISON & Co.'s, 244, Regent Street, corner of Little Argyll Street (First Floor). It is requested that Advertisements may be sent not later than Thursday. Payment on delivery.*

The Musical World.

LONDON, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 1870.

MR. CHORLEY AND ST. PETER.

MR. H. F. CHORLEY has thrown a bomb from his old mortar, the *Athenæum*, into the Benedictine camp, and, as yet, nobody seems any the worse for it. Let us explain the significance of this warlike movement.

Gossip like the following has long been current in the musical world:—A. "Benedict is working hard at *St. Peter*, I hear."—B. "So much the better. The words are Chorley's, are they not?"—A. "They were to have been."—B. "Explain."—A. "Benedict, I am told, rejected Chorley's libretto as impossible."—B. "Won't there be a row?"—A. "Rather."—The "row" has come, for on Saturday last, within twenty-four hours after the performance of *St. Peter* at Birmingham, the author of the rejected libretto fired his first ready-charged gun; in other words, he came forward, with a lengthy "card," personal to himself, and remarkably so to Mr. Benedict. Remembering that we have to do with an *ex parte* statement, we will look at the said "card" awhile.

Let us promptly give Mr. Chorley the credit he claims. The veteran journalist has made a name and fame which, "at the eleventh hour of his career," no affront can injure. He, therefore, looks upon the rejection of his libretto with philosophic calm, being especially consoled by the thought that he has written enough to show the world his abilities. So far Mr. Chorley is right. We all know exactly what he can do; and feel tolerably sure that his character as a librettist cannot be lowered by any contumacious behaviour on the part of mere musicians. "Why, then," some may ask, "has he so eagerly rushed into print?" Mr. Chorley himself explains with customary emphasis. He comes forward burning with desire to save his younger brethren from the snares of "persons pretending to hold a place in the rank of artists." The vivid fancy of the author of *The Prodigy* sees multitudinous spiders, like Mr. Benedict, waiting for multitudinous flies, like himself, in the hope of repeating the "Walk into my parlour" business, and so compassing their ultimate humiliation. "Hence these tears." Hence, rather, the warning note in the columns of the *Athenæum*. "Look at me," says Mr. Chorley, to his yet unscathed fellows, "I make an exhibition of myself for your sakes, that you may not be 'first cajoled and flattered, and subsequently ignored and insulted.'" The sacrifice is as great as the object of it is noble; and, assuredly, in this respect, no hour of Mr. Chorley's career better becomes him than the "eleventh."

Having paid the above just acknowledgment on demand, we arrive at the marrow of Mr. Chorley's complaint—stay, though, what is all this about the "intermixture of secular words with those of Holy Writ?" Has Mr. Benedict been guilty of intermixture in the actual *St. Peter*? No. Has anybody, relative to *St. Peter*, urged the intermixing theory? No. Then why the emphatic delivery of opinions which Mr. Chorley, himself, hesitates whether to call "wire-drawn scruples," or "convictions

worthy of consideration?" We confess ourselves unable to answer the question; but as regards the point afflicting Mr. Chorley with uncertainty, we have no doubt at all. The "wire-drawn scruples" are obvious. This, however, is apart from the main issue, to which we now come.

Pending a statement from the "other side," we are not in a position to judge between Messrs. Chorley and Benedict on matters of fact. The former gentleman tells a straightforward story, very precise in regard to dates, and not less definite in its charges; but *Humanum est errare*, and it is clearly within the range of possibility that Mr. Benedict may be able to disprove some, at least, of Mr. Chorley's assertions, and upset his position. At the same time, he may not have it in his power to do this; and speculation thereupon would, of necessity, be dangerous. Certain qualifying observations, however, suggest themselves, even accepting Mr. Chorley's statements as true. To these we will give brief utterance.

1. Mr. Chorley says: "Mr. Benedict, both personally and in writing, expressed himself (to speak moderately) entirely satisfied with what was set before him, and this not only to myself but to other persons. 'Is it impossible, we ask, for Mr. Benedict to have done so and yet to have found, on closer examination of the libretto, that it required serious alteration in order to meet his views?' The composition of an oratorio cannot be set about as one would begin the manufacture of a table or a coat; it being essential, for instance, that the worker should feel perfect sympathy with his materials. We can understand, therefore, how a musician may be satisfied with the result of a cursory glance at a libretto; and yet be profoundly dissatisfied when addressing himself to the task of composition. We are inclined to believe in this, as Mr. Benedict's case; especially while there is an entire absence of motive for the strange behaviour with which he, an honourable gentleman, is charged."

2. Mr. Chorley says: "It was, further, expressly agreed on in terms of the most perfect amity, that no alterations or modifications of the text were to be made save by myself." This is, probably, the truth; but is it the whole truth? We are tempted to ask whether Mr. Benedict may not, over and over again, have suggested improvements in the libretto, which Mr. Chorley may have absolutely refused to sanction, treating his work as a perfect thing. The hypothesis is not unreasonable, and, if it hit the truth, we see at once how the affair of the oratorio came to a dead lock. A composer who could not set his librettist's words, and a librettist who would not meet his composer's views, are a "house divided against itself," which cannot possibly stand. What wonder if, in these circumstances, Mr. Benedict acted upon the first law of nature, self-preservation, and took the book of *St. Peter* into his own hands.

On another matter, Mr. Chorley has hardly been as explicit as could be wished. He talks about the "remodelling" of his *St. Peter*; but without telling us in what degree the actual libretto is new. If Mr. Benedict's book differ entirely in plan from that of Mr. Chorley, the latter gentleman has only to complain of rejection. If, on the other hand, it be the original libretto, with alterations, his grievance is of a character every literary man will keenly estimate. On this matter particulars will doubtless be forthcoming; and we can only wonder why, presuming they strengthen his case, Mr. Chorley left us to speculate upon the actual facts.

Here we leave the matter for the present; our only motive for taking it up just now being anxiety lest too much weight should be given to statements purely one-sided. When Mr. Benedict speaks, if he think it worth while to speak at all, we may have more to say.

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

THE War has called forth our sympathies in a new and unexpected direction—unexpected, because a few weeks ago we could have no idea that the Paris musical journals would cease to appear. So it is, however. *Le Ménestrel*, *L'Art Musical*, *La France Musicale*, and their lesser brethren, have put up the shutters, locked the office doors, and sent all hands to the drill ground. We condole with them, while taking the event as a matter of course. Bellona has things her own way just now, and Minerva must hide in some congenial corner, till the terrible war-goddess is satisfied. May the latter result be speedy; and may our French contemporaries soon reappear with all their wonted happy mixture of fact and fiction.

A REPORT of the meeting of the General Committee of the Birmingham Festival appears in another part of this impression, and is chiefly noticeable for some remarks of the Orchestral Steward, Mr. Peyton. Referring to the engagement of artists, that gentleman said, "In regard to this matter, the Committee thought that the Festival ought to carry with it the sympathy of the musical world, and that they ought not to engage artists at sums which would not be returned. Guided by this principle, they did their best in the selection." It would appear, therefore, that the Committee resisted the demands of singers who put a higher price upon their services than could be paid with hope of profit. As the whole transaction is governed by laws of demand and supply, we shall be content to applaud the committee, without censuring the singers. Both were within their rights; but it is to be expected that public sympathy will go with those who exercised the privilege of refusing ruinous demands.

GIVEN a fresh subject of study involving both theory and practice, to be introduced into a great national seat of education; what better introduction could it receive than at the hands of a professor who is preceded by a reputation, and a deserved reputation, such as to bring together to his first lectures crowds from all quarters, men and women, young and old—crowds probably the most eager that have ever attended a University course since the Middle Ages; whose words, whether true or false, have it in them to stir and brace the fibre of their hearers, and to set them thinking and working; who fights with a generous ardour for the ascendancy of moral over material influences and ambitions; who is able to drive home all that he has to say or to suggest with the weight of a single-minded conviction, and the charm of an impressive, an engaging, an admirable personality; who has spent the best years of his life in the pursuit as well as in the encouragement of the arts which he is appointed to profess; who unites to the gifts of a brilliant verbal expositor the gifts of an accomplished and faithful manual student, who believes in his mission, and is manifestly determined to devote all his powers and all his enthusiasm to the task he has undertaken? Such, we all know, is Mr. Ruskin.

PROVINCIAL.

BRIGHTON.—A correspondent informs us that:—

"Mr. H. Corri's English opera troupe began a fortnight's engagement at the Theatre on Monday. The company consists of Madame Ida Gillies-Corri, Misses Harrison, Rosire, Collins, Messrs. F. Gaynar, Corri, Manley, Watts, and Henry Corri. *Il Trovatore* was selected for the first night's performance.—Signor Mario's farewell concert is announced for the 22nd inst. Mlle. Liebhart and Mlle. Enriques are to be the lady vocalists, and Signor Sivi, the violinist, and Chevalier de Kontski, pianist.—A concert has been given by M. D'Alavene, at the West Street Concert Hall, assisted by several French vocalists, and Mlle. Secretain as pianist."

COLOGNE.—The Theatre-Committee have adopted the plans and estimate for a new theatre. The house is to contain one thousand eight hundred spectators, and the expense, including the cost of the stage, scenery, &c., not to exceed one hundred and fifty-five thousand thalers.

MUNICH.—The Theatre Royal re-opened on the 25th ult.—the day of Herr R. Wagner's wedding with Liszt's daughter. Nothing by the Musician of the Future, however, figured in the bills, which included Weber's "Jubel-Overture;" a spirited prologue by Hermann Schmidt; and Grétry's *Richard Cœur de Lion*.

BIRMINGHAM MUSICAL FESTIVAL.

(From our Special Correspondent.)

BIRMINGHAM, Sept. 3.

I sent you yesterday a brief telegram announcing the success of Mr. Benedict's oratorio, of which I shall have further occasion to speak after treating of the previous night's concert, in accordance with the somewhat worn quotation (so often impressed on irregular mortals), that tells us "Order is Heaven's first law." Thursday evening, then, opened with the fourth novelty of the Festival, in the shape of a cantata, entitled *Nala and Damayanti*, the words of which are by Madame Sophie Hasenclever (daughter of the well-known German painter, Schadow), translated by our clever countrywoman, Madame Natalie Macfarren, the music being by Dr. Ferdinand Hiller, the friend and intimate of Mendelssohn—a musician who has long stood in the foremost rank of the professors of the divine art, and of whom the following memoir will doubtless be read with interest:—

Ferdinand Hiller, pianist and composer, was born at Frankfurt-on-the-Maine, on the 24th October, 1811, and is, consequently, in his 59th year. While still a child, the great talent he exhibited for music already determined his vocation, and no pains were spared to perfect his musical education under Hoffmann, the imaginative composer of music, A. Schmidt, the great contrapuntist, Vollweiler, and subsequently Hummel, Mozart's favourite pupil, with whom young Hiller spent two years in Weimar. He was not ten years old when he made his first public appearance as a pianist, and in his 17th year he published, at Vienna, his first composition—a quartet for piano and strings. The subsequent fertility of the young composer is shown by the fact that the opus number of his new cantata, produced at the Birmingham Festival on Thursday evening is 150. On the completion of his musical apprenticeship Ferdinand Hiller spent no less than seven years in Paris, where he devoted himself chiefly to classical music, and especially to the study of Bach and Beethoven. In the winter of 1836-37 returning to his native town, he was appointed director of the Orchestra of the Frankfurt Cecilia Verein. His next move was to Milan, where his unsuccessful opera of *Romilda* was produced. The winter of 1839-40 found him at Leipzig, where he produced his oratorio, *The Destruction of Jerusalem*, which deservedly ranks as one of his best and most successful works. Returning to Italy, he married there in the summer of 1841, since which time he has lived in turn at Dresden, Frankfurt, and Leipzig, in which latter town he directed the famous Gewandhaus Concerts, in the winter of 1843-44. Dr. Hiller afterwards spent four years in Dresden, where he brought out his two operas, *Der Traum in der Christnacht* (*The Dream in the Night of the Nativity*), in 1844, and *Coradin der letzten Hohenstaufen* (*Coradin, the last Rose of the Hohenstaufen*), in 1847. In the same year he accepted the office of music director at Düsseldorf, where he remained three years, removing thence, in 1850, to Cologne, where he was invited to undertake the office of Capelmeister. Here, the already existing Concert Institute flourished greatly under his vigorous management, where, also, he founded the Rhenish Music School. In the winter of 1851-52 he went to Paris, where he directed the Italian Opera. He passed the following spring in London, and returned in November of the same year to Cologne, where he has since constantly resided, with the exception of occasional journeys, of which the last was to Russia.

Of his numerous compositions, the most notable, besides those incidentally mentioned above, are his various collections of songs—especially the *drei Bücher neue Gesänge*—some pianoforte sonatas, two concertos for the same instrument, several excellent studies for the violin and piano, impromptus, rhythmical studies, an operetta without words, *à quatre mains*, and of vocal pieces for solo, chorus, and orchestra, the "*Gesang der Geister über dem Wasser*" ("Song of the spirits above the water"), and "*O weint um sie*" ("Oh weep for her"), after Byron; *The Night of the Nativity*, "Heloise," the *Loreley*, "Night," "The morning of Palm Sunday," the "93rd Psalm," and "Whit-tide," may be cited as the most important. His great choral works are *The Destruction of Jerusalem*, already mentioned, the oratorios, *Ver sacrum* and *Saul*, and the opera, *Die Katakomben*, (*The Catacombs*). Among his instrumental compositions his Symphony in E flat is especially good.

The outline of the cantata has already been given at length in the columns of the *Musical World*, and therefore need not be now recapitulated; suffice it to say that the subject, being of very remote Hindoo origin, i.e., some 3,000 years since its author (or compiler), Vigasa, having lived some five centuries before Homer, can hardly be expected to create any very profound interest at the present day. Nevertheless, the story has in itself a certain poetic grace, of which Dr. Hiller has not failed to avail himself, and the result is a work teeming at once with elegant fancy and rich in ingenious devices, abounding in beauties which are certain to develop themselves more and more at each successive hearing, and showing everywhere the hand of a

master, the oriental colouring being above all things conspicuous throughout; while the entire work is no less remarkable for its originality than the thorough command which Dr. Hiller possesses of the varied resources of voices and instruments. The conditions to which I have already more than once had occasion to allude, prevent my going fully into each separate number of the new cantata, in which Miss Edith Wynne, Mr. Cummings, and Mr. Santley sustained the principal parts with credit to themselves and advantage to the work, while the band and chorus alike exerted themselves to do justice to the production of the eminent musician, who conducted his own composition, and who was at the first received with such warmth and at the conclusion cheered with such hearty enthusiasm as must have clearly proved we are no strangers to his well earned reputation, and that the estimation in which he is held here will be considerably enhanced by the manner in which he has executed his first commission for a Birmingham Festival. A few minutes having allowed the excitement time to cool, Madame Arabella Goddard and M. Sainton came forward to perform Beethoven's sonata in F, for pianoforte and violin, a task of which it is almost superfluous to say that they both acquitted themselves to perfection. With regard to our Queen of Pianists I have heard it more than once remarked that her playing this week has been if anything more magnificent than ever. The following formed the second part of this interesting, if far too lengthy evening programme (see page 605).

That the overture to *Guillaume Tell* (a stock piece at all Festivals) should be given in such a manner as might be expected with such a body of instruments and such a conductor, need hardly be said; but a separate and strong line of praise must be awarded to Mr. Edward Howell (whose early studies were directed by that admirable musician, the late Lovell Phillips), for his playing the violoncello introduction with a breadth and purity of tone which not only electrified the audience but at the same time delighted the older connoisseurs, who remember every first violoncellist who has taken the part for the last quarter of a century. The remainder of the programme calls for no particular remark—artists and pieces being alike more or less familiar.

MONDAY, Sept. 5.

For the first time during the week rain fell after the termination of Thursday evening's concert, just a mere sprinkle to commence with and then a steady downpour which lasted all through the night, and lent a very gloomy opening to the day which was to witness the most important novelty of the Festival. Fortunately, however, as the morning advanced the heavy clouds receded, and some time before the gaily dressed multitude began to flock towards the Town Hall, glorious sunshine burst forth and gave happy augury of the treat that was in store for those who were about to assist at the production of a work so soon to confer enduring lustre on the composer and the place that has had the honour of first presenting it to the public. Precisely at half-past eleven o'clock Mr. Benedict took his place at the conductor's desk amidst the applause of welcome spontaneously accorded by audience and orchestra. The overture, descriptive of evening by the Sea of Galilee, at once gave evidence of the skill of a practised master, and prepared the mind to expect still greater things to follow; nor were such expectations disappointed, for from the first note to last the entire work was listened to with increased interest, and pronounced on all hands to be in every respect worthy the genius of Weber's most accomplished pupil—a musician whose sterling qualities have now been proved in every form of composition. The oratorio of *St. Peter* is divided into two parts, the first embracing the Divine Call and Trial of Faith, the second comprising the Denial and Repentance, each subject being treated in an appropriate and fitting manner. As it is intended shortly to give to the readers of the *Musical World* a detailed analysis of the work, illustrated in music type, it would be but anticipating were I to attempt to particularize each individual number of an oratorio which, if there be any appreciation of all that is best and noblest in music is certain to be heard very many times and to take its place as an acknowledged masterpiece of art. It would be scarcely possible to improve upon the four vocalists to whom the principal parts were assigned, and as Mdlle. Tietjens, Mdlle. Patey, Mr. Sims Reeves, and Mr. Santley, one and all, sang their very best, it will be quite understood that, so far as they were concerned, there was literally nothing to be desired, while both chorus and band did their utmost to ensure the success of a work whose composer is no less remarkable for his amiability of manner than for his unquestionable ability. Three pieces were repeated at the desire of the President—the chorus of Benedict, "The Lord be a lamp;" the unaccompanied quartet, "O come let us sing;" and the soprano air, "I mourn as a dove." So far as effect is concerned, the last air, for Mdlle. Tietjens, "Gird up thy loins," might well have been asked for again, but that it would have been a little too much to have expected a singer, even with the great German *prima donna's* exceptional powers, twice to

have attacked such a succession of high passages, ascending to D flat, although her countrymen had that day achieved the greatest victory of modern times. At the conclusion of the work a perfect hurricane of applause arose from every side, which was renewed again and again, until Mr. Benedict had once more presented himself and acknowledged the enthusiastic greetings of the vast audience, whose demonstration was of that genuine and unmistakable sort which can never by any possibility be confounded with that mild and artificial form of approval which goes to make up a mere *succès d'estime*.

It was a mistake on the part of those who arranged the Festival programme to supplement a complete and lengthy oratorio like *St. Peter* with the *Requiem*, in which Mdlle. Ilma di Murska, Mdlle. Drasdel, Mr. Vernon Rigby, and Signor Foli were set down for the principal parts. How these artists acquitted themselves, and how the work went generally, I am unable to say, at least from my own observation, and therefore prefer to maintain a silence, which may be considered discreet or the reverse. It is, however, no breach of confidence to mention that, long as was the morning's performance, i.e., nearly five hours, it would have been considerably longer had not the idea originally entertained of commencing with Spohr's "God, Thou art great," been abandoned by the Committee.

In accordance with the custom which has for some time obtained here, the last evening instead of being of the same miscellaneous character as its three predecessors is devoted to oratorio, so as to suit the requirements of those to whom a morning performance may be inconvenient. Upon this occasion the work chosen was *Samson*, the seventh in order of Handel's oratorios, begun eight days after the completion of the *Messiah*, finished in five weeks, produced at one of the Lenten performances at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, 18th February, 1743, and said to be preferred by its composer even before its immediate forerunner, a judgment at the present day hardly likely to be endorsed; despite the many and striking beauties with which it abounds. The soloists on Friday were Mdlle. Tietjens, Mdlle. Patey, Mr. Santley, Signor Foli, Mr. Cummings, and Mr. Sims Reeves. The intense pathos which the last named singer throws into that most touching air, "Total eclipse," has never been equalled, much less excelled by any vocalist, and those who were present will not readily forget how Mr. Reeves, who has sung at every performance, morning and evening, all through the week, distinguished himself on the last night of the Festival, his share in the duet, "Go, baffled coward," with Signor Foli, being as remarkable for its defiant vigour as the air above named was conspicuous for its depth and tenderness of feeling. Mdlle. Patey again added largely to her previous successes by the manner in which she sang throughout, her greatest triumph being in "Return, O God of Hosts." Although considerably past 11 o'clock when Mdlle. Tietjens sang "Let the bright Seraphim" (the *obbligato* trumpet accompaniment being played by Mr. Thomas Harper with all his wonted skill), so spirited was her delivery of the well-known air that the audience with one voice asked for its repetition, a demand which the artist would have been quite justified in declining considering the amount of work that had fallen to her share during the past four days. Mr. Santley's splendid delivery of "How willing my paternal love" was in every way worthy his well-earned reputation, and what Mr. Cummings and Signor Foli had to do was done well, while the band and chorus, despite their prodigious labours, played and sang with unflinching energy up to the last note, the same arrangement of "God save the Queen" which had opened the Festival bringing it to a close. Ringing cheers then followed for some minutes, Sir Michael Costa being applauded again and again, the band and chorus, who best knew the indefatigable labours and immeasurable worth of their chief, being loudest of all in their demonstrations. Calls were got up for Benedict, Sullivan, Hiller, and Barnett, and those present of the gentlemen named responded to the compliment. A strong and well-deserved word of praise is especially due to Mr. Stockley and Mr. Sutton, upon whom all the weight of training the choruses devolves, and whose labours extend over many months preceding the Festival. The result of these labours has been a series of choral performances of the highest mark, and the unqualified approval of a body of singers who do the highest credit to the careful manner in which they have been prepared for their task. To Mr. Peyton, who by his courtesy and business-like manner shows himself a worthy successor to Mr. Oliver Mason, my especial thanks are due, while the duties of those gentlemen who take upon themselves the office of Stewards have been discharged with a quiet unobtrusiveness deserving of all praise, and particularly commended to the imitation of the Stewards of the Three Choir Festivals.

DRINKWATER HARD.

MUSIC RECEIVED FOR REVIEW.

ROBERT COCKS & Co.—"The New Prussian March," by J. Oesten; "Watch by the Rhine," by W. S. Rockstro; "Angel of Peace," song, by Anne Fricker. NOVELLO, EWER, & Co.—Two vocal quartets, The 23rd Psalm, for voice and piano (or organ); "A Lily thou wast," "An old Song," "Give," "The Fountain," "A Farewell"—songs, composed by Edward Hecht.

THE LATE ALFRED NICHOLSON.

The following letter has been addressed to the Editor of the *Leicester Advertiser* :—

"DEAR SIR,—Your obituary columns will contain this week the name of one of our townsmen, which, as a musical amateur, I should not willingly see passed over without a few lines of respect and affectionate remembrance. I allude to the removal by death of Alfred Nicholson from amongst us, who, by his talent as an oboist, was known throughout the whole of the three kingdoms, and universally esteemed *facile princeps* amongst English oboe players. The modesty which almost always accompanies true talent of every kind was a very conspicuous component of his character, and his readiness to oblige and delight his friends by his wonderful power of musical expression were well known and appreciated. His services for public charitable occasions were equally prompt and kind. The estimation in which he was held by the musical profession was well shown by the eager offer of gratuitous services from all the leading instrumentalists in the London orchestra, on the occasion of his being first stricken down with paralysis; and the result of this will be long remembered by the performance for his benefit of the *Ancient Mariner*, conducted by the composer, Mr. Barnett, in which all the instrumental orchestra were gratuitous professional players, and the performance unrivalled in beauty and delicacy by any ever heard here during the memory of man.

"Alfred Nicholson was born June 30th, 1822. His father, Henry Nicholson, was master of the Duke of Rutland's private band, and will be remembered by the older inhabitants as a skilful musician. Alfred began to study at six years old, and was afterwards placed under Mr. Aisep (a sterling musician of His Majesty's Theatre orchestra), and Mr. Tolbecque for violin, but preferring to make the oboe his chief instrument, he was put in charge of M. Barret (of whom he continued the favourite pupil), by whose side he played in the opera orchestra until disabled by the fatal attack which prostrated him.

"He was a distinguished member of all the Festival orchestras for many years, and attended especially all the Birmingham Festivals since 1834 (and died the day of the commencement of the latter this week). He was a member of the Philharmonic orchestra, the Royal Italian orchestra, Sacred Harmonic Society, and every important society in existence in London, since he went there, and his example, I know, has been an encouragement to his brothers, who are worthily sustaining the family reputation for musicianship, and whose reputation is great, and increasing in the provinces as well as London.

"As a friend who has known him from boyhood, I can bear testimony to his power of commanding the esteem and affection of all who knew him, and have recollection of many pleasant musical meetings with him, when his kind consideration for the deficiencies of those less gifted than himself, was as conspicuous as his own able conquest of all the difficulties which presented themselves in the performance of the music before him.

"It is pleasant to be able to refer, which I do very briefly (because I do not wish to raise the veil of private life), to the willing and kindly manner in which his afflictions have been lightened, and his failing strength upheld by the unwearied sympathy and assistance of his nearest friends. Suffice it to say they have done what they could, and I trust in doing so they will find their affliction for his loss lightened, and their own kindness returned in that form to themselves.

"Poor Alfred was proud of the old town, and loved the old friends in it, and though he has passed away after a long and distressing calamity, he will not be forgotten hastily by many here, amongst whom I am proud to include, dear Sir, yours respectfully,

"WILLIAM ROWLETT.

"39, Princess Street."

NEW MUSIC.

Angel of Peace. Song. Written by the Rev. J. B. DALTON, M.A. Music by ANN FRICKER. [London: R. Cocks & Co.]

A SIMPLE and expressive song, which will command acceptance everywhere. The words are above the average of religious ver-*es*, and Miss Fricker has set them with much feeling. It is long since we met with a song at once so unambitious and so good.

Watch by the Rhine (Die Wacht am Rhein). Transcribed for the Pianoforte by W. S. ROCKSTRO. [London: R. Cocks & Co.]

It was to be expected that the popular German song of the Rhine would fall into the transcribers' hands; and here we have one of many versions. Mr. Rockstro has treated his theme in a manner so ornate that we doubt if Wilhelm would at once recognize his own composition. This, however, will be no drawback to those who love works of the kind, and to such we recommend the piece before us.

The New Prussian March. Composed for the Piano by TH. OESTEN. [London: R. Cocks & Co.]

This is not the least interesting of the many musical effusions springing out of the present miserable war. If any pianists wish to celebrate the Prussian victories they can now do it, without much trouble, in strains both vigorous and pleasing.

ENGLISH ACTORS OF OUR TIME.

In nothing is the difficulty of contemporary criticism more apparent than in acting. The natural bias of the human mind to hold the men with whom it acquires familiarity late in life inferior in all respects to those it knew in youth, to believe the past greater than the present is never so obvious as in judgments passed upon actors. In other cases the assertions of the *laudator temporis acti* can be disproved. Those who maintain that modern Englishmen are smaller in size and feebler in constitution and in strength than their sires are answered by the fact that Englishmen of the present day can wear the armour of their ancestor, and that from the monuments upon tombs we can gather that Englishmen of half-a-dozen centuries ago were much the same in shape and build that they now are. Is degeneracy in valour or in pluck maintained? We answer it in a score of ways. Never was better riding to hounds or manlier cricket exhibited. For deeds of heroism the behaviour of our soldiers during the Indian Mutiny, and in the battles of Balacava and Inkerman may stand beside that of the troops of Cressy or of Flodden, while the manly action of those noble fellows who perished in the Birkenhead shows that the poorest soldier can by circumstances be rendered a Philip Sidney. Had such a deed as they performed been done in any country but England a monument would have commemorated the fact, and blazoned to future generations their worth. In literature, lastly, and in art, the comparison between the present and the past can be readily established. We know that in spite of the cry of degeneracy echoed by every writer since Homer, human intellect attained its supreme development in the comparatively modern days of Elizabeth. We know that in writers like Montaigne, Milton, Locke, Voltaire, Goethe, Wordsworth, Shelley, Victor Hugo, Tennyson, Ruskin, Swinburne, and Rossetti, the glories of old literature are worthily transmitted and maintained, and placing their works together we defy the warmest supporter of old times to show us any sign of decadence.

In art we can speak less boldly, but we know that in this there is revival, and that though the glories of the remote past may not be reached, those of the past nearer at hand are equalled and even eclipsed. But in acting the case is different. A clamour of testimony from all who have attained middle age, tells us that actors now-a-days are not fit to be mentioned side by side with those who went before, and the evidence of preceding writers and playgoers supports the theory that the process of degradation now going on with accelerating speed has been in existence since the infancy of histrionic art in England. In the greatest as in the least the falling off is equally perceptible. We can thus establish that Kean was less than Garrick, and Garrick less than Betterton. Could we go back further we should find, doubtless, that Betterton himself was inferior, according to public report, to Burbage, who in turn came behind some now forgotten exponent of miracle play or religious pageantry. These statements cannot be confuted. In the case of the actor we cannot compare the living with the dead. No vestige of their work except such portion of it as is preserved in tradition, which probably caricatures it, is left behind. Of the tens of thousands down whose cheeks they brought tears of sorrow or joy, not one probably has left behind him a written word upon their merits. Concerning most actors we know nothing; concerning all we know nothing which will enable us to form a thorough judgment upon their merits. Cibber has rendered the greatest service to modern playgoers of any writer of past times. He has left us a gallery of dramatic portraits, each face in which seems recognizable. As a consequence we know the stage in the time when Betterton and Mountford, Kynaston, Wilks, Sandford, Mrs. Betterton, Mrs. Oldfield, Mrs. Mountford, and Mrs. Bracegirdle were its ornaments better than we know it in the time of our own infancy and adolescence. But even with this aid, the best we have received or are likely to receive, we cannot compare living actors with dead. We cannot tell whether Mountford or Charles Mathews was the greater comedian. The fact that the actor's art dies with him and that no trace of it can survive, is what first strikes one in connection with it. This fact has of course been often dwelt upon. It confers upon the profession itself a measure of the pathos of human life. Where all is fugitive feelings of sadness must intrude. We see an actress enchanting an audience. Delighted thousands bask in her smile and hang upon her lips. Yet while we know that her talent, the godlike gift she possesses, the power almost unequalled of stirring man's blood and thrilling his pulse with pleasure or with pain, is as ephemeral as the beauty of face and limb; that her art "expires before the flowers in her cheeks." That the memory of those who have delighted us in our youth lingers in our hearts, and that no modern siren can breathe melodies that make us forget the old seems almost a sort of attempt on the part of nature to compensate for the fate which inevitably attends the actress. Brief as is the triumph she knows it is the most complete a woman can obtain. No crown of empire ministers half the gratification given by that of dramatic art. "A month or twain to live on honeycomb," then to fade and leave behind recollections that make, to those who have obtained them, all subsequent performances pale and colourless such is the fate of the queen of comedy, perhaps on the whole, when the general scope of nature's work is taken into account no unsatisfactory fate after all.

"Et rose elle a vécu ce que vivent les roses,
L'espace d'un matin."

* There is such a monument, though "K" does not know of it, in Chelsea Hospital.—Ed. M. W.

The considerations upon which we have dwelt surround with difficulty the task of him who essays to write upon modern actors and acting. He can hope to please or satisfy but a small proportion of his audience. Very naturally those on whom he writes with the school of believers each one of them carries with him will consider whatever commendation he can bestow inadequate, whatever censure he implies undeserved. Those, on the other hand, who have the keenest appreciation of the subject and are most likely to read his notes and observations will be sure to judge all praise excessive. As the traveller in Switzerland when he finds you know most spots he has explored tries again and again until he brings forward one spot you have not visited, then gleefully assures you your visits have been wasted while that spot remained unknown, so the reader of theatrical criticisms will maintain that all merit is usurped by those actors whom you have not seen. Undaunted, however, by all considerations of this or any other kind, we purpose to give a few sketches of living actors. That we know the difficulties of the task we undertake is shown by what we have said. We endeavour, however in the present introductory portion to explain our motives in commencing the task before us, and to solicit indulgence in its execution. To speak by name of contemporaries is a thankless office from which by choice most men would gladly retire. Unfortunately, the necessity that some should so speak of them exists, or, what is practically the same thing, is thought to exist.

The list of actors who attain absolute excellence is great. Whether or not we have any actor of very highest mark is what we can scarcely tell. We do not profess to have a tragedian who can maintain the glories transmitted in an unbroken chain by Betterton to Macready. But in other departments of art we regard the stage as wealthy. We need but let our memories run over a few of the leading names with no hope that we shall be able to dwell at length upon half of them, to see that our stage is not poor so far as regards actors of comedy and of realistic drama. Some few actors even we have who are capable of excursions into the regions of high and poetical art. In general strength our companies are greatly behind those of a generation past, and immeasurably behind those of a century ago. In the merits of individual actors the present generation may compete with any that has preceded it. We conclude this introductory portion of our criticisms with an appeal to those whose merits we shall have to discuss, and the public we shall have to address. Actors must see in their lifetimes an estimate of their merits, or else their merits are likely in the future to receive very inadequate recognition. Hence, a measure of the delicacy of contemporaneous criticism is removed. The contemporary must, in the very condition of things, give to posterity the only verdict it can have. There is no actor alive, moreover, of whom we can speak in terms of unmitigated eulogy, though there are many for whose talents we entertain a profound admiration. Actors, thus can scarcely find the mention of their names entirely to their liking. We ask them, accordingly, to look at the spirit of the whole, rather than that of particular passages, and we ask both them and the public to believe that, however much fault-finding may force its way into these columns, the writing emanates from one whose sincere conviction is that criticism is truest to itself and to the art it illustrates when it most strives to be appreciative. K.

BEETHOVEN AS A VIENNA VOLUNTEER.*

The date was 1796. The French under Bonaparte were advancing victoriously in Italy. At this juncture, two noblemen, as patriotic as brave, were inspired by a happy idea. Count Franz Hugo von Salen-Keifferscheid and Count Wenzel Paar drew up, with the assistance of Captain Friedrich Wilhelm von Mayern, of the Imperial Austrian army, a genial plan for the voluntary arming of the people. It was instantly approved of by the Emperor Francis. In an incredibly short space of time about eleven thousand recruits had assembled, who equipped themselves at their own expense, and asked the Government only for arms. There was soon a corps of 14,000 men, a light fusilier battalion, complete in every particular. It enjoyed the privilege of playing the "Grenadiers' March," and the public functionaries and students serving in it retained their stipends. It bore the name of the *Wiener Freiwilliger* (Vienna Volunteers). The Commander was Major Kowosdy, of the Imperial Austrian service, and the consecration of the colours took place on the glacis, before the Burg-gate, in presence of the Emperor and the Empress. The latter had given the regiment a handsomely embroidered belt for the ensign to support the colours in. Amid vociferous cheers the regiment marched off, by the way of Klagenfurt and Brixen, to join Field Marshal Alvinczy at Trent.

Let us transplant ourselves to the Neuer-Markt. Opposite the "Mehlgrube," as it was called (now the Hotel Munch), was a recruiting-tent, so surrounded by people that it was hardly possible for any one to get inside. Opposite the tent the band of the new corps had stationed itself on the balcony of the Mehlgrube. It was conducted by a young man of about twenty-five, whose intellectual, quick eye was continually shooting forth glances over the scene beneath. Near the recruiting-tent, in the market place, stood a man, somewhere about thirty, of robust build, with broad athletic shoulders. He was gazing

with a longing eye on the young volunteers who had just been enlisted. This man was one of the best known individuals among the people. He was called "Hupfauf-und-Schnappnieder." * He earned his living as a coffin-bearer, and his name was Joseph Hupfauf. By a strange caprice of nature, while he was shaped like a giant in the upper part of his body, his lower extremities were altogether out of keeping with his head and shoulders. He had awfully bowed legs, and could make but very slow progress, his legs giving way so frequently that the above nick-name, which has survived even to the present day, was universally bestowed upon him.

Hupfauf was as ardent a patriot as thousands of others, better built than himself, and all he thought of was how to get enlisted as a volunteer. He had already been to several recruiting tents, and endeavoured to carry out his wish, but, in every case, the officials had regretfully refused the portly individual, as soon as their glances caught sight of the unsatisfactory extremities, which threatened, at every step, to leave the seeming Hercules in the lurch. The Mehlmarkt was his last hope. If he did not succeed in getting accepted there, he would have to return to his old calling of coffin-bearer. Unfortunately, he was not more successful in the Mehlmarkt than in other places, and, with despair in his heart, he sneaked away.

Twilight had set in; the band in the balcony of the Mehlgrube had ceased playing, and the bandmaster, arm-in-arm with one of the recruiting officers, who, like himself, resided in the Alser suburb, was strolling quietly home. In the Wipplingerstrasse, their attention was directed to a portly individual whose hat did not display the well-known tuft, though, to all appearance, the wearer would have made a splendid volunteer. He must have been drinking a little more than was good for him, for he staggered about in every direction, and his legs sometimes gave way so that he could not walk straight a single step.

"What an acquisition he would be to the Volunteer Corps," said the bandmaster, directing the officer's attention to the athlete.—"He must be a cur," replied the officer, Lieutenant Krail, "for it is scarcely credible that a man of such a build can, at a moment like this, shirk military duty. But stop—perhaps we are wrong; he is going down into the wine-cellar, and there are usually recruiting officers there. Let us follow him and try our luck; perhaps we may supply the Committee with a finer bird than any one else has done."

There is still in the Wipplingerstrasse at No. 25 (originally No. 352) a wine-cellar, called from the *Färbergasse*, which is close at hand, the "Färberkeller." At that time such subterranean drinking-places were the rendezvous of crowds of high-spirited young fellows, and, consequently, greatly frequented by recruiting officers. Hupfauf was aware of this, and in his despair had hit upon a little plan for realizing his patriotic wishes. He descended into the cellar, sat down at a table, and, sticking his unshapely legs under the bench, waited with a glass of wine before him, to see how near he was towards attaining his object. He pretended to be the worse for liquor, and felt certain of attracting attention. Scarcely had he taken his place before the bandmaster and the recruiting officer entered, and immediately seated themselves near him.

"Here's luck to you, my worthy friend!" exclaimed the officer, merrily. "I feel convinced you have only been waiting for me, to join the ranks of the Volunteers against Bonaparte."—"Not a bit—I should lie, if I said so," replied Hupfauf, anxiously. "Supposing I wanted to do so, it wouldn't be any good, for nature has neglected me shamefully. First of all, I haven't got a bit of courage."—"And you are not ashamed to say so, ain't you?" observed the bandmaster, indignantly. "Look ye. I am not an Austrian, though I hope soon to be one, and yet I have voluntarily joined—if only in my own line, namely, music—the brave soldiers. My notes shall inspire the volunteer host, and no bullet shall make me break down in my tempo. Come, drink with us the toast: Long live the Emperor Franz; long live the gallant army!"—"No, my dear bandmaster, no. I am very 'greable to drink the—the health of the Emp'r and his gallant sojers, but I'm hang'd if I'm a-going along with 'em. I han't got any pluck."—"You're sure to have pluck—you cannot help it—if you are only once in the midst of the fighting," answered the officer.—"No—besides, as I have told you, I ain't bodily qualified. I'm so weak and shaky on my legs, that I am near falling every step I take."—"What are you talking about! When the charge has once sounded; when you once hear the roll of the drums, and when once the smell of the powder tickles your nostrils, there will be no more falling."—"It's all very well to talk about charging. How can I, with my wretched body, run fast enough to charge?"—"You will have no need to run yourself. Those about you will carry you with them."—"But I waddle like a duck."—"That will be splendid for swimming over the rivers."—"No—say what you like, you will not persuade me."

The more the coffin-bearer insisted upon his bodily unfitness, the

* From the *Signale*.

* "Hop-up-and-Bob-down."

less did his companions believe him, and the more did they strive to enlist so fine a man. Wine was ordered, and the glasses so often emptied, that the timid giant appeared to become tipsy, and gradually began to pluck up courage. At last, he allowed himself to be persuaded, and consented to enlist. The officer joyfully counted the bounty out on the table for him, and settled the bargain with the formal shake of the hand.

"So, now I am irrevocably a Vienna Volunteer, eh?" said the recruit in a drunken accent, and sticking the bounty in his pocket.—"Certainly," replied the bandmaster, "you shook hands and accepted the bounty. You must now have your name entered. Come along—the enlisting tent on the Freieung is, no doubt, still open."—"All right; the sooner the better," replied the other, as, suddenly growing sober, he stood up and advanced.—"What the deuce does this mean!" exclaimed the officer, scrutinizing him from top to toe. "I fancy I know those bow legs."—"I dare say you do; unfortunately I have no others."—"Confound it! why that's Hupfaut, whom we refused to-day in the Mehlmarkt."—"Yes; that's correct. I'm Hupfaut-und-Schnappnieder."—"Who can make anything out of you? You waddle with your feet like a duck."—"A splendid qualification for swimming over rivers."—"Your legs collapse every minute."—"What do you mean by collapse? When once the signal is given to charge; when once I hear the roll of the drums; when once the smell of the powder tickles my nose, there'll be an end to anything like collapse."—"You talk about charging, do you? What! with those crooked legs? With your wretched figure, how could you ever run fast enough to charge?"—"It is not necessary that I should be able to do so. In close column, my comrades will carry me along with them."—"Confound it all, he is turning my own words against me. Just listen, like a good fellow. Be reasonable, and retire of your own accord. I should be always taunted with enrolling you. I make you a present of the bounty; leave the Vienna Volunteers alone."—"I will add ten florins, if you will withdraw," said the bandmaster.—"Gentlemen, all your talking is no good. I am a volunteer, and I mean to remain a volunteer. I am now going to the Freieung to get my name entered."

His two companions followed him with a heavy heart. The officials in the tent laughed heartily at the trick Hupfaut had played, but he was refused and sent off. When the consecration of the colours took place afterwards upon the glacis, and the bandmaster was stationed on the right wing of the Corps, someone tapped him on the shoulder. It was bow-legged Hupfaut.

"I beg your pardon, bandmaster, don't you really think I could march with you?"—"I do not; but there is one thing I can tell you: I respect your patriotic sentiments, and only wish that every man in Austria capable of bearing arms were like you. I shall often think of you, and I will preserve the memory of noble-minded 'Bow-Legs' among the Vienna Volunteers."—"Aye, do, bandmaster. I, too, will often think of you. By the way, what is your name?"

"My name is Ludwig van Beethoven."

"Very good; now, Herr van Beethoven, if you return safe and sound to Vienna, come and see me at the Neubau, in the Wandelstadt; that's where I live. My warmest good wishes accompany the Vienna Volunteers."

Endless cheers disturbed the conversation; the words of command re-echoed along the ranks, and the music struck up—the Emperor Franz was approaching to be present at the consecration of the colours. Then, amid the vociferous plaudits of the immense crowd, the Volunteer Corps marched out from Vienna.

Beethoven wielded, as a volunteer, the bandmaster's conducting-stick in 1796, and the first part of 1797. He was present at Anghiari, Rivoli, Bevilacqua, Minerbe, and San Giorgio, and—as he had predicted—no bullet made him break down in his tempo. He composed several marches, which have probably been lost, or which he afterwards considered too insignificant to be included in the list of his works. The only composition of his that has survived from this period is "Oesterreich's Kriegsalied," words by Friedberg; but Carl Gross-Athanasius, the painter and writer on musical subjects, possesses a portrait, which, dating from about 1795, is a vivid likeness of the young Volunteer Bandmaster.

We are a week nearer to the coming of Nilsson, so that we can count seven days of anxiety as past and at rest. But this fact only intensifies the public interest to hear one of the world's few great vocal and dramatic artists. In less than two weeks Nilsson will leave the shores of England en route for New York. The date of her leaving is fixed for the 3rd of September, so that she will reach New York early enough to afford her a few days' rest, before she throws the glamour of her beautiful voice and her art refinements over the people of this city. From present appearances, every seat for the first half dozen concerts will be bought up in advance, and the price of tickets will be quoted by speculators at fabulous amounts. But the wary will eschew the speculators and seek the legitimate sources of sale.—*Watson's Art Journal*.

HAYDN'S SEASONS.

We can only construe neglect of the *Seasons* as one of those freaks for which nobody can account. Certainly there is nothing in the subject and nothing in the music capable of affording an explanation. Rather are both subject and music attractive in the highest degree; the only way of accounting for the fact, therefore, is to suppose that the *Creation* absorbs all the notices that can be spared to Haydn's oratorios, by virtue of its more decidedly religious and scriptural character. This, to large numbers of English people, would appear a sufficient explanation. It is hardly such, however, looked at from a musical point of view.

Among the noticeable features in Haydn's life is a vigorous attempt to make his mark upon oratorio when far advanced in years. It may have been that during his long residence with the Esterhazy family—a period of thirty years—he was not encouraged to work in that department of the art, especially as his one Italian oratorio, *Il Ritorno di Tobia*, did not make a great success. We are inclined, however, to believe that both the *Creation* and the *Seasons* were prompted, in the first instance, by Haydn's English experience. In 1793, the master visited this country, and, probably for the first time in his life, was brought close to the genius and success of Handel. Here he heard the noble works of his predecessor, and, not only felt their power himself, but noted the hold they had obtained upon the people generally. He was then fifty-nine years of age, and had all his life been a hard worker. But Handel wrote oratorios in more advanced years; and why should not Haydn. The idea doubtless occurred to him, and stayed by him; so that when, in 1797, the Baron von Swieten, librarian to the Emperor of Austria, suggested the *Creation*, as a subject for musical treatment he took up the matter with ardour.

In 1798 the work was ready and was received with rapture. That Haydn delighted in it and loved it, all his biographers tell. "I was never so pious," said the master, "as when engaged on the *Creation*; I fell on my knees daily and prayed God would vouchsafe me strength to carry out the work." The result must have seemed to him a providential blessing on the spirit in which he laboured. With what humility he gave his oratorio to the world may be gathered from some remarks in a letter to his publishers, Breitkopf and Härtel:—"As for myself," wrote Haydn, "now an old man, I only wish and hope that the critics may not handle my *Creation* with too great severity, and be too hard on it. They may possibly find the musical orthography faulty in various passages, and, perhaps, other things also which I have for so many years been accustomed to consider as minor points; but the genuine connoisseur will see the real cause as readily as I do, and willingly cast aside such stumbling-blocks. This, however, is entirely *inter nos*; or I might be accused of conceit and arrogance, from which, however, my heavenly Father has preserved me all my life long." As we have said, the *Creation* was a success; and when, after a first performance in Paris, the artists engaged sent the master a gold medal, inscribed "Hommage à Haydn," the old man must have felt stimulated to a fresh effort in his new field of labour.

Baron von Swieten was, happily, ready with another subject, and Haydn again set to work. The baron had been reading Thompson's *Seasons*, and, naturally enough after the success of Haydn's descriptive writing in the *Creation*, the idea occurred to him of making it the theme of an oratorio. We can fancy with what readiness the aged musician entered upon his task. He had a thoroughly congenial subject; the encouragement of success; a strong conviction that much could yet be done ("O God," said he in one of his letters, "how much remains to be done in this splendid art, even by a man like myself"), and he must have felt that to him the night was fast coming in which no man can work. So, in his seventieth year, Haydn buckled on his armour for a last great effort.

THADDEUS EGG.

PESTH.—Herr Ellinger, the "heroic tenor" (*Heldentenor*) at the National Theatre will celebrate next month the twenty-fifth anniversary of his heroic-tenoric career.

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